"What shall we do? Our people are here waiting for the signal."

"Tell them to go home. Do not fall into the trap of *provocateurs!*"

For two hours or more we walked back and forth on the quay, urging workers to go home, arguing with the obstinate, comforting those who seemed shocked by the manifestation of the party's weakness. We were happy to see that the crowd was becoming less dense.

Meanwhile the general strike had made further progress in St. Petersburg and in the province. On October 17, Trepov had sent troops to reopen the electric power stations and gas works, but the workers mixed up the switches and by night the capital was again plunged into darkness. To ease the situation, Trepov ordered bonfires at the crossings of main streets. These, however, gave little light, and the city looked as if a torch had been put to it at a hundred points. Then a powerful projector was placed on top of the Admiralty tower at the end of Nevsky Prospect, and a bright beam shot up in the sky. The streets became still darker by contrast, and the crowds greeted Trepov's comet with derision. The panic in conservative circles was increasing from hour to hour. Many people felt that the government had lost all control over the troops, and that power was falling into the hands of a bloodthirsty mob.

But the prevailing feeling in revolutionary circles was that the strike had been lost. The Workers' Committee—which by then had assumed the new name of the Workers' Soviet—tried to meet twice that day, but the first meeting place was surrounded by troops and at the second place police dispersed the delegates. Not until late at night did four score delegates get together in a women's college that, by some oversight, had not been taken over by the military. The mood of the delegates is reflected in their resolution:

Whereas the present strike is not local but all-Russian;

Whereas the struggle of the proletariat of Russia with Tsarism has reached the stage at which the general strike may bring the decisive blow to the shattered despotism; and

Whereas in many cities the tide of the worker movement is rising and the end of the strike in St. Petersburg might harm the all-Russian movement, the Soviet has decided to continue the strike.

A very weak resolution indeed! It implied that, as far as St. Petersburg was concerned, there was no point in continuing the strike, but local workers had to go on out of consideration for other cities.

I did not attend this meeting. Our group of speakers had assembled that night for a conference with representatives of the St.